15–17 Nov European conference on systemic lupus erythematosus, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Contact: Conference Secretariat, IMEDEx, Bruistensingel 144, PO Box 3283, NL-5203 DG's Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands. Tel 31 73 408 304. Telefax 31 73 408 304

In 1991

12 Apr BSR Spring Meeting, Oxford
Contact: Dr A Mowat, Heberden Roundsman

30 June–6 July XIIth European congress on rheumatology, Budapest, Hungary

18–20 Sept 8th BSR annual general meeting, Imperial College, London

In 1992

13–15 Apr 3rd International conference on systemic lupus erythematosus, Queen Elizabeth 2nd Conference Centre, Westminster, London
Contact: Dr G R V Hughes, Rayne Institute, St Thomas's Hospital, London SE1 7EH. Tel 071 633 9422

Book reviews

Osteoporosis: Prevention, Management, Treatment. H H McIlwain, D F Bruce, J C Silverfield, M C Burnette. (Pp 150; \$9.95.) New York: Wiley, 1988. ISBN 0-471-61688-5.

This is a handbook for patients, actual and potential, and for all lay readers with an interest in osteoporosis. It is written jointly by three American doctors, one a specialist, who share a Florida practice, and by one professional writer. Within its context it provides a comprehensive account of osteoporosis—what it is, how it should be managed, its risk factors, signs and symptoms, and plans for prevention and treatment from childhood to old age. It is profusely but clearly illustrated, readable, and informative.

It might be argued that the benefits of high calcium intake and calcium supplementation are less well proved than the authors uncritically maintain. The minute details given of the calcium content of everything we eat might, therefore, lead to unnecessary obsessions on the patients' part.

Nevertheless, the book is judicious in its recommendations for therapy and treads a fair line between accepted and experimental treatment. Other details include a simple description of quantitative computed tomography and even the exact calcium content of every 'dish' available at McDonalds and Burger King! The flavour is therefore transatlantic, and one disadvantage to British readers is the limitation of all drug names to American proprietary preparations. Despite this, it may be the best paperback handbook on the subject to date and can be recommended to all interested lay readers and other health care groups in nursing, physiotherapy, and dietetics.

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T C B STAMP

Acupuncture, Trigger Points and Musculoskeletal Pain. P E Baldry. (Pp 308; £27.50.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1988. ISBN 0443-039-917.

Dr Baldry, a consultant physician and past chairman of the British Medical Acupuncture Society, has written an excellent book on this often neglected area.

He gives a clear account of musculoskeletal pain and its relation to trigger points. These points often at a distance from the site of the pain may be treated by the insertion of acupuncture needles. The author's stated aim is to take acupuncture out of the category of alternative medicine, and I believe he has succeeded in writing a book which will be of interest to many.

The book is divided into three parts. The first gives an interesting short account of the development of acupuncture in China and its subsequent use in Europe from the 17th century. The second part discusses the basic principles of trigger point acupuncture. This section also includes a chapter on the

scientific evaluation of acupuncture with a summary of relevant trials and useful chapters on the neurophysiology of pain and the pain suppressing effects of acupuncture. Areas of future research are suggested.

The third section of the book is an extensive practical manual based on the personal experience of the author. This section, as are the others, is clearly written and gives his approval to diagnosis and treatment together with appropriate case histories. Each chapter is well illustrated with clear anatomical drawings and pain referral patterns from trigger points. There is an up to date list of references at the end of every chapter.

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B HAZLEMAN

The Colour Atlas of Bone Disease. Victor Parsons. (Pp 112; £14.95, paperback.) London: Wolfe Medical, 1989. ISBN 0-7234-1602-8.

This is a paperback edition of a volume first published in 1980 and unfortunately not revised. It has some very beautiful illustrations which show (most often) the clinical appearances of the disease backed up by histological examination of the tissues where appropriate. As an atlas it therefore achieves its purpose.

The introduction, quite rightly, mentions the importance of a dietary history and includes tables of foods with high calcium, phosphate, vitamin D, and vitamin C content. The illustrations which accompany these tables are in an appendix at the end of the book which serves no useful purpose. It consists of four pictures of 100 g portions of food items such as bread, sardines, and milk which, even if you did not know what sardines look like, are of such poor quality as to be of no help.

The section on osteoporosis describes use of the Singh index of femoral trabecular patterns for the diagnosis of osteoporosis. Unfortunately, no mention is made of the newer and more reliable techniques for measuring bone density. When vitamin D physiology is discussed the active metabolite of vitamin D, 1,25-dihydroxycholecalciferol, is incorrectly referred to as 1,25 OHCC when it should be 1,25(OH)₂CC, an error which should not be present in a book dealing with bone diseases.

The section on the microscopic structure of bone is beautifully illustrated and describes clearly the events in bone remodelling. There is no mention made, however, of the role of growth factors and cytokines in bone cell physiology. Such an omission clearly indicates the need for a new, revised edition. In the chapter on 'Bone involvement in system disease' conditions such as achondroplasia and osteogenesis imperfecta are illustrated but there are no diagrams for the various mucopolysaccharidoses. A subsection in this chapter deals with bone disease accompanying inflammatory joint disease. There is a brief mention of rheumatoid arthritis with appropriate